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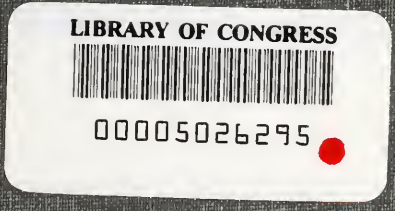

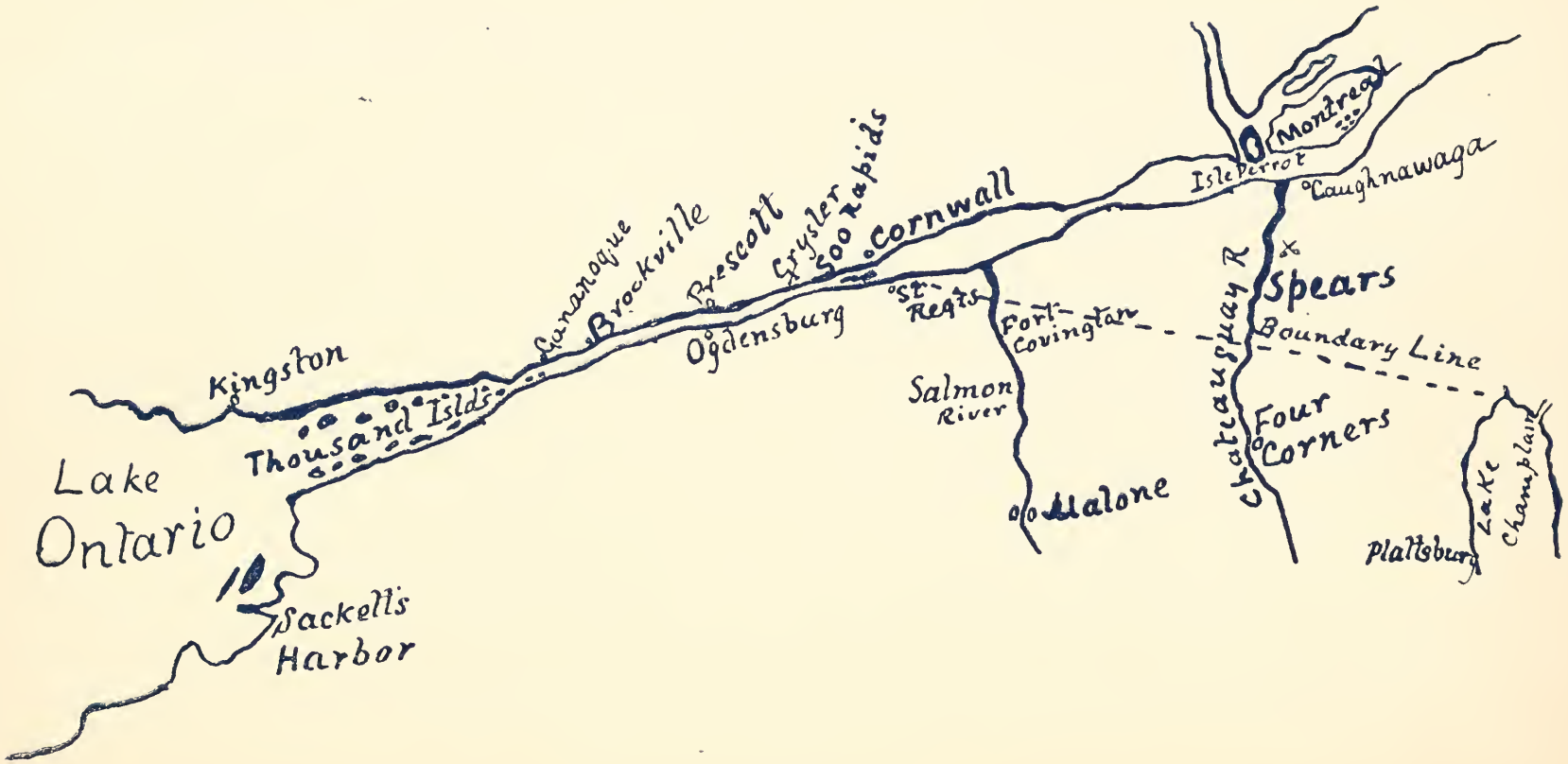
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# THE U.S. CAMPAIGN OF 1813 TO CAPTURE MONTREAL

On the 18th June, 1812, the United States declared war against Great Britain, and on the 12th July followed up its declaration by invading Canada from Detroit. The invasion had a disgraceful ending. From Niagara a second invasion was attempted on the 13th October, which was also repulsed. The results of the operations of 1812 made it plain to the authorities at Washington that efforts to conquer Canada by invasions west of lake Ontario must be futile, for the reason that overrunning the western territory left intact the source from which the supplies and reinforcements came to renew resistance. It was Britain that furnished the means to continue the war, and the channel through which she sent them was by the St Lawrence. Block that channel and the current of supply would end. There were two points at which this could be done—Montreal and Kingston—and President Madison's cabinet were divided as to which should be attacked. The preference was for Kingston, as being nearer the United States and giving an opportunity for the co-operation of the naval force that had been organized on lake Ontario. With Kingston in American possession, no supplies could filter past it to the British forces in the west. This was admitted, but it was also pointed out that all of Canada east of Kingston would be untouched, and that while Montreal was in British possession an army could be brought in by sea that might retake Kingston. Quebec was the proper place to strike, but it was regarded as impregnable. Montreal came second. Once plant the stars-and-stripes over it and not only would all the military stations west of it, from Kingston to Niagara, and from Niagara to Sandwich, be compelled to surrender from lack of supplies, but the boats and ships which brought men and material from England could no longer land them, for Montreal was at the head of navigation. As the importance of Montreal was realized, the advocates of an onward movement on Kingston included the capture of the other—a combined attack would be made on both Montreal and Kingston from land and water.

The weak point in the defence of Canada was the slender

link that connected Montreal with the west. In summer it was the St Lawrence, the southern bank of which, where it was narrowest, was American, so that boats going up were exposed to capture, and were often made spoil of. In winter, the troops and material landed at Montreal had to make their way westward by sleigh or wagon along a backwoods road that skirted the north bank of the river. To inquire why the American plan of campaign of 1812 did not include a movement upon Montreal to snap that link, instead of wasting strength on the shores of lakes Ontario and Erie, is beyond the scope of this monograph. Having realized the importance of gaining Montreal the Washington war department bent all its energies in preparation. These were directed by Gen. Armstrong, the secretary of war, who intended taking command of the expedition.

In 1813 Montreal was a town of small dimensions, consisting of a few narrow streets perched on the margin of the St Lawrence, in which dwelt less than 15,000 people. It had no defensive works, and the worst an invader could expect would be hastily thrown up batteries along the river front. The strength of the little town lay in its inaccessibility. Situated on an island, surrounded by deep and wide stretches of water, it could only be reached by boats. An army, however strong it might be, would be powerless to effect its capture unless accompanied by a fleet of boats. This Armstrong fully realized, and while he issued orders to bring together an army such as the Republic had never before attempted, he also made preparations for the building of boats. Where they should be built was maturely considered, when it was decided Sackett's Harbor, at the eastern extremity of lake Ontario, was the only place that combined security from attack with a commodious bay. While the snow was on the ground the felling of trees was started and the sawing of their trunks into plank. Attracted by high wages, carpenters crowded to the little village and a beginning was made on the boats. These were flat-bottomed scows of such simple construction that they were quickly put together. Over 300 were to be built. Depending upon the current of the St Lawrence to sweep them to the island of Montreal, the oars placed in them were more for steering than rowing; crews to manage them were drawn from the sailors of New England ports and New York. French Canadian voyageurs, who volunteered freely, were secured as pilots. What was going on was not unobserved by the British, and an attack on Sackett's Har-

bor was planned. On the 28th May, 1813, its garrison sighted a fleet which had crossed from Kingston. Landing a considerable body of troops the assault was delivered next day from both land and water, and was being crowned with success when the Governor, Sir George Prevost, who accompanied the expedition, got into one of his fussy panics and, to the disgust of his officers, ordered the recall of the attacking forces. But for Prevost, the campaign of the Grand Army of the North would have ended that day.

It was obviously unnecessary to concentrate all the soldiers designed for taking Montreal at Sackett's Harbor. It would save the building of many boats were the army divided, the larger part to go in the boats, which, after landing them near or on the island of Montreal, would cross the St Lawrence and ferry over the other portion of the army, which would be waiting their arrival on the southern bank. This plan not only saved the building of many boats, but had the further advantage that, in menacing Canada by two separate columns, the attention of the British commanders would be distracted. So it was decided the invading army should go in two columns, to meet at an agreed point convenient to Montreal.

**Hampton**

The point chosen for assembling the co-operating corps, the eastern column, was Burlington, on the shore of lake Champlain. Here troops came in slowly. The war was unpopular in New England, which, consequently, furnished few regiments for the regular army. The militia, which each State was compelled to raise, were not available for the expedition in hand, for a condition of militia service is that they should be sent to no foreign country. The consequence was, the eastern column depended on troops raised south and west of New England, the majority coming from Virginia. There being no railways, these regiments had to march, so that it was the end of August before the force at Burlington was considered large enough to take the field. The command was entrusted to General Wade Hampton. His instructions were specific, he was to co-operate with the army at Sackett's Harbor, and to be found waiting on the shore of the St Lawrence, anywhere between Caughnawaga and the mouth of the Chateauguay, when the flotilla from Sackett's Harbor appeared. The first step in the journey was taken early in September, when the army embarked on boats and crossed lake

Champlain to Cumberland Head, N.Y. The British commander, Sir George Prevost, had waited in Montreal all August, expecting an attack by the army at Burlington. On hearing they had crossed the lake he rashly concluded they were going to join the force at Sackett's Harbor for an assault on Kingston, and thither he hurried with his available forces. Being instructed to make an incursion into Canada to distract the enemy, Hampton broke camp at Chazy, and taking again to his boats, on the 19th September, sailed to the point where the lake narrows into the Richelieu, and established his camp at Champlain. From there a party crossed into Canada, surprising the outpost at Odelltown, killing part of the inmates. The first day's march was a surprise. Their chief assailants were the Indians, who kept up a fusilade from the bush on either side of the road, which, however, inflicted only trifling losses. What convinced the Americans that it was impossible to go on, was their inability to find water. They were crossing a black ash swamp yet it was dry as tinder. The beds of brooks and small rivers were dry. Scouts reported there was no running-water in the Lacolle. The summer had been the hottest and driest on record, and even rivers of considerable size had ceased to flow and only in the deeper hollows of their course were pools to be found. The horses had to be sent back to Champlain to be watered in the lake; the rank and file were desperate with thirst. A council of war was held, when it was decided to advance farther was impracticable, and that the St Lawrence would have to be reached by another route than the road to Laprairie. The suggestion was made they go by the Chateauguay valley. On being notified of the proposed change, Armstrong approved of the Chateauguay route, expressing his regret, however, that Hampton had not persevered as far as St Johns, the capture of which military depot would have perplexed Prevost. On the 22nd Sept. the march was begun to Four Corners, 40 miles west of Champlain. The road was a rough bush-track and the weather was hot, which joined to wretched commissariat arrangements caused the march, which occupied four days, to be unnecessarily severe on the men. Four Corners was a hamlet situated on the eastern bank of the Chateauguay, a small river having its origin in two lakes buried in the Adirondacks, and which, flowing northward, empties into the St Lawrence a few miles west of Caughnawaga. Running alongside the Chateauguay was a road which led from Four Corners to the Basin, where the Chateau-

guay mingles its waters with the St Lawrence. The expectation of the army was that it would at once take this road, and that by the time they reached the St Lawrence, the flotilla of boats from Sackett's Harbor would be found waiting to ferry them across to Isle Perrot, which was the spot chosen for uniting the two columns preparatory to advancing on Montreal. To cross the branch of the Ottawa that separates Isle Perrot from the island of Montreal a bridge was to be formed of the boats that had transported the troops from Sackett's Harbor. To the surprise and disgust of the soldiers, they learned they would have to stay where they were, for word had been received that the army at Sackett's Harbor had not moved. Until notified it had embarked on its boats, Hampton was not to advance.

Tents were pitched on the clearings south and west of where the railway-station of Chateaugay, N.Y., now stands, the old name of Four Corners having been superseded. Hampton and his staff found shelter in the one tavern. His haughty air repulsed the simple backwoodsmen, who, for the first time saw a Southern planter and the general of no mean army. Of the thousand slaves he was reputed to have in the Carolinas a number waited on him as servants. Little blockhouses were put together as shelter for the outposts, of which there was need, for Indians lurked in the woods and cut off stragglers. On the 1st October they made an unexpected attack on the camp, killing an officer and a private, wounding another, and carrying off two as prisoners. It was not a serious affair but it had a bad effect on the morale of the army, the soldiers contracting an absurd dread of a foe, who, though despicable in numbers, was unseen and unsleeping. The men shrank from sentry duty and not a night passed without dropping shots heard from the woods. To this natural fear was added discomfort. No new clothing was issued, and the cotton uniforms for summer wear, now threadbare and ragged, were poor protection against the white frosts and rains of the fall. Food had to be hauled from Plattsburg, keeping 400 wagons, drawn by 1000 oxen, constantly on the road, so that the supply was subject to the weather and often short. To hardship was added the discontent that comes from enforced inaction, with the result that sickness appeared and the number of invalids increased each day. Hampton was desirous of moving towards the St Lawrence, but knew it would be to no purpose until the flotilla of boats would be found awaiting him. His instructions from Arm-

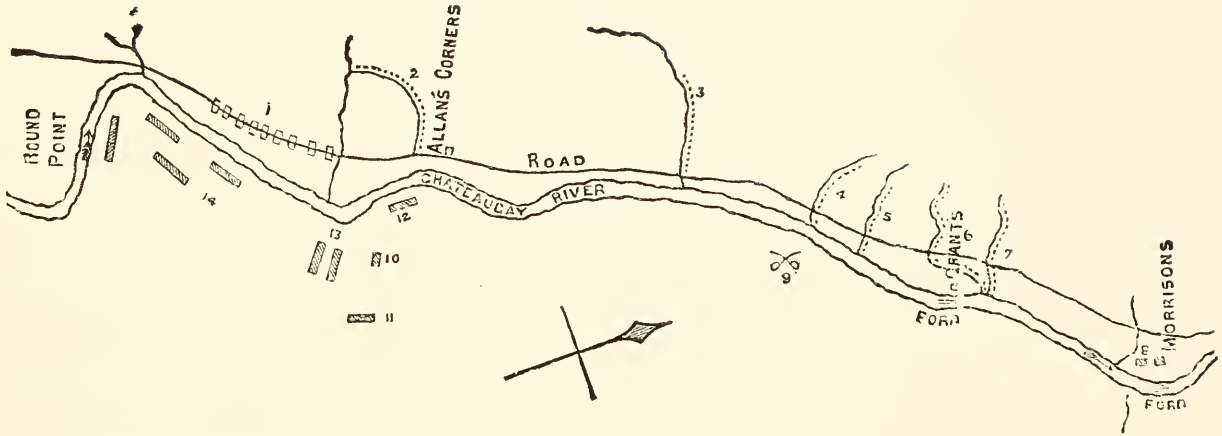
strong were precise. He was to hold fast to his camp at Four Corners until "we approach you," and Armstrong's subordinate in another letter told him he "must not budge" until everything was matured for the start from Sackett's Harbor. The little army, posted in the bush, with an untrodden wilderness behind them and looking down upon the forest clad plains of Canada, where they knew they would find a foe, chafed in idleness until the 19th October, when a messenger arrived from Sackett's Harbor with a letter ordering Hampton to march to the mouth of the Chateauguay as the flotilla was ready. On the 21st October the advance brigades left Four Corners, after a stay of 26 days. Altho the army was small, not numbering over 4000 effective men, the road was so bad that it took several days to get the whole in motion. A body of militiamen, 1500 in all, who refused to cross into Canada, was left to guard the stores and camp, and to protect the line of communication with Plattsburg.

Brig.-General Izard, who led the advance, cut a pathway through the woods. Crossing the country with celerity he suddenly appeared before a blockhouse erected where Ormstown now stands and surprised the guard stationed in it. His men prepared the adjoining clearings for a camp, and next day the leading regiments with part of the baggage-train appeared and occupied it. There had been a decided change in the weather. The prolonged drouth had ended and heavy rains had converted the road, over which long trains of wagons and a battery of artillery had to be dragged, into a quagmire. The distance from Four Corners to Spears (whose lot the village of Ormstown now occupies) was only 23 miles, yet it took the army four days to cover. The route lay through a dense bush, broken at rare intervals by the small clearings of recent squatters. Altho the British had been promptly notified the Americans had crossed, no effort was made to harrass them on their march thru' the woods. From Spears downward, along the north bank of the Chateauguay, there was a tolerably continuous succession of clearings. Hampton had full and accurate information from his spies of the opposition he would meet on leaving camp at Spears.

General De Watteville had been sent from Montreal to place every possible obstacle to the advance of the Americans. There was only one road by which they could come, the track that followed the windings of the river. A number of small creeks, in flowing to the Chateauguay, had worn deep chan-

nels for themselves in the soft soil, so that the road crossed a deep gulley wherever a creek was encountered. These gullies De Watteville perceived could be converted into formidable lines of defence, so he ordered that the trees that topped the banks of these gullies be so felled as to form barricades and afford shelter for the firing-line. Between what is now known as Allan's Corners and the foot of Morrison's rapids, a distance of four miles, there are six of these gullies. The preparation of the first three of these ravines he entrusted to Major de Salaberry. The fourth, the most important, for it faced the ford at Morrison's, was assigned to Colonel Macdonell and his Glengarry Highlanders. The sixth line De Watteville kept in his own charge, and here he planted his artillery. Altogether he had 1600 men at his command, nearly all militia or regiments of volunteers.

Hampton saw that forcing these successive barricades of felled trees was going to entail sacrifice of life, which he thought could be avoided by a flank movement. Dense bush and swamps made attempts to turn the barricades on their north side impracticable but by sending a column along the southern bank of the river it could cross at Morrison's ford, and so take all the lines of defence in their rear, except the main one under De Watteville, whom Hampton counted on retreating on seeing his front defences had been turned. The drawback to the plan was that it involved a march through a dense bush, broken by swamps, hollows formed by creeks full of water from the recent rains, and, worst of all, to cover such ground in the dark, for to be effective in carrying the ford the movement must be a surprise. The difficult task was entrusted to Colonel Purdy, who was in command of the 1st brigade. At dark on the evening of the 25th he led a regiment of the line and the light corps down to the ford, where the Ormstown grist mill now stands, and waded to the south bank of the Chateauguay. His troubles began at once. To lead a body of soldiers in daylight through an untracked forest, cumbered with fallen trunks and thick with underbrush, is difficult, but to do so in the dark is to attempt the impossible. The men straggled, and ever and anon, there were cries for help from those floundering in marsh and pool. To aggravate the situation, it began to rain. Purdy blamed his guides, but without cause, for it was so dark they could not recognize landmarks. A halt had to be called before two miles were travelled, and the little army shivering from wet and cold, for they dared not betray their presence to the




PLAN OF MOVEMENTS AT CHATEAUGUAY

1 Column of Hampton's division that made the attack. 3 Second line composed largely of Indians.
2 First British line of defence, in charge of Lt.-Col. deSalaberry. 8 Colonel Macdonell's position.
4, 5, 6 and 7 lines of defence, of which 4, 5, and 7 were protected by abatis.
9 Where Capt. Daly encountered the Americans advancing towards Grant's ford and defeated them.
10 Capt. Daly's position in the afternoon when he compelled Purdy to withdraw.
11, 12 and 13 position of Americans when Daly came upon them.
14 Where Purdy encamped in the afternoon and sent his wounded across the river.

Scale 1000 yards to the inch.

enemy by starting camp-fires, passed the night soaked by the rain that now fell heavily. When their weary vigil was broken by sunrise the march was resumed. It being now light Purdy knew he could not take the ford by surprise, but pushed on in the hope of forcing a passage by assault. Fourteen hours had been spent in traversing six miles. On stragglers from his column approaching the river-bank they were recognized, and the alarm given that the Americans were at hand. Macdonell ordered part of his force to cross the river to meet them. They found the Americans in a thick cedar swamp. The Beauharnois sedentary militia fled at the first volley, but the two supporting companies the Americans found to be of different metal and there was, for a few minutes, a sharp conflict. What decided the affair was the rain of bullets showered down from the opposite bank by Macdonell's men. Purdy, with his exhausted and discouraged men, shrank from giving the order to storm the ford. He withdrew his force to what he considered a safe place in the woods, and, having sent a messenger to Hampton to tell of his situation, awaited his orders. While thus resting, Hampton's movements need to be described.

The order to advance had been given early in the morning of the 26th and, leaving baggage and tents in the camp at Spears, the troops began their march. On the advance guard nearing Allan's Corners, the French Canadian company that held the outpost, abandoned their blockhouse and fled to the breastwork behind. This encouraged the Americans, who yelled and cheered On the main body arriving the order to halt was given, and spreading out on the clearings the men lit fires and cooked dinner. Hampton confidently counted on Purdy's success, and therefore until he should hear from him refrained from ordering an assault on the enemy in his front. Time passed with no word from Purdy. Dinner over the men fell in and at 2 p.m. Brig.-General Izard was ordered to bring his brigade to the front. The Americans marched along the road, turned into the clearing at Allan's Corners and extended in line within gunshot of the breastwork behind which the British force was hid. Then there was a pause. While chafing at not hearing from Purdy, there suddenly came the rattle of musketry from the opposite side of the river. Hampton's suspense was ended, for he rashly concluded Purdy was pushing the enemy. He sent the order to Izard to begin firing. With regularity that did credit to their drill, the companies in turn fired. These platoon vollies were responded to from the

breastwork in a sputtering fashion. The shooting was at long range and with the musket of that time such shooting was almost harmless. Nobody was killed, but it was different with a party of American skirmishers who tried to flank the breastwork at its north end. They encountered a band of Indians. There was hot work for a few minutes, ending in the flight of the Americans. At this juncture a messenger, who had swam theChateauguay, about a hundred feet wide, hurried to Hampton to tell him that the firing he heard was caused by an attack of the British on Purdy's brigade, which he had repulsed with difficulty. Instead of carrying the Morrison ford, Purdy was now on the defensive and most anxious to extricate his force from what was a dangerous position. Hampton sent the order for him to retreat to a point where he could ford the river and rejoin the main army. Hampton was crestfallen. He had depended on Purdy's flanking movement, and its failure disconcerted him. He sat on his horse silent and irresolute. He knew it was in his power to storm the rude brush barricade that faced him and the others behind it, but that would involve loss of life. He was angry at Purdy for not notifying him earlier of his failure to carry the ford. Had he known that in time, he would not have broken camp at Spears. The explanation of why he had not heard from Purdy was simple. The messenger Purdy had sent in the morning with the despatch describing his situation had, after much difficulty, succeeded in reaching the camp at Spears, where he naturally expected to find the General. To his surprise, he discovered the army had moved forward, and thus the despatch was not placed in Hampton's hands until too late for him to change his plans. The day had been dull and now great steamy clouds were gathering that told of a rainy night, and the brief light of a day in late October was about spent. He would suspend operations and consider what should be done on the morrow. The bugles sounded his order to retire. In perfect order, undisturbed by a single shot, the Americans filed into the road and marched back to the field where their commissariat wagons had halted. The pause before Hampton came to his decision was unique in military history. His best brigade stood in line ready to charge, yet not firing a shot, while their opponents watched them from their place of concealment reserving their fire for the assault that did not come. Had Hampton known that among the watchers was Sir George Prevost it might have spurred him to an attempt to capture him, and end the war.

The governor-general on hearing of the Americans having invaded Canada left Kingston and hurried to the front, riding in with his staff while the Americans were pouring their harmless volleys into the breastwork. Prevost waited until he saw them execute the movements that broke their formation and fall into line to march to the field where they were to pass the night, when he left for DeWatteville's headquarters.

Interest again centres on Purdy's movements. He had gathered his men on a wooded point that jutted into the river On the land side he had made a barricade of brush and fallen trees where a rear-guard covered him from such another attack as an hour before had nearly routed his brigade. His plans were made—he would send his wounded across on rafts and then make a floating bridge of the logs and fallen trees that lined the bank and so rescue his little army. As rafts were finished his wounded were lifted on them and ferried to the north bank, while axemen were rushing the floating bridge by which the troops were to escape. This took time, so it was dark before fit for use. Purdy sent a message to Hampton asking for a regiment to cover the crossing of his men, for the Indians had crept up towards him and were watching his movements, firing whenever they saw a mark. The messenger returned with the information that Hampton and his command had gone into camp for the night a mile west of the frail bridge Purdy had expected would be his path to safety. He was intensely provoked. In his report he exclaims "I was deserted, without the smallest guard to cover my landing." About a hundred had crossed the bridge when, on bullets beginning to come thick its use had to be abandoned. Those who got over found their way to the camp as also did the wounded. There was no help for it but endeavor to reach the ford at Spears, which meant repeating the dreadful ordeal of the night before, with the additional horror this time of being tracked by Indians. The floating bridge was torn apart, and the march began, the men starving and exhausted by fatigue. The march had not lasted half an hour when Purdy found it was absolutely necessary to give them rest. Getting them into a compact mass, and posting sentries, the wearied men slept. What followed Purdy describes: "We rested undisturbed until about midnight, when the enemy came up and made an attack upon us, but were soon routed. The men at this time were formed, and lying on the ground they were to occupy in case of an attack, and were ordered to, and did im-

mediately, rise, seize their arms, and remain under them the remainder of the night. An excessively heavy rain prevented the firing both of the enemy and ourselves, except occasionally a single gun from the former. Our troops were ordered not to fire, but, in case of a repetition of attack, to charge bayonets; this was accordingly done. The enemy charged several times, and as often were put to flight. It is observable in its place, that, so greatly were the men overpowered by fatigue, though in a situation every way dangerous, and in which they had every reason to believe they should be sallied upon by the enemy every moment, many were unable to conquer their disposition to sleep and it was not in the power of the officers to keep them awake."

"Inability to shoot," recalls that the muskets of those days were flintlocks, therefore useless unless the priming was dry. There was no more rest for the wearied men, for the Indians kept up a constant alarm, yelling and shrieking, while the Americans prayed for daylight. At sunrise they resumed their march, and beyond an occasional shot the Indians, who were only a small band, dared not come to close quarters The rapid Croche was reached, the men waded across, and speedily found the food and rest they so sorely needed in the camp at Spears.

Considering the number of Americans exposed to fire, their loss was trifling, and almost wholly confined to Purdy's column. Killed, wounded and missing did not exceed fifty. It is a commentary on how popular honors are distributed, that while deSalaberry is enshrined as the hero of the day, of the men whom he commanded not one was killed, while the companies that fought on the south side of the river, where deSalaberry did not set foot, and who really won the day by baffling Purdy's flank movement, are ignored. They lost 5 killed with 12 wounded. Of the losses of the Indians no record was made; it must have far exceeded that of the whites for they came to close quarters with Hampton's left flank and dogged Purdy for 24 hours.

Hampton rode ahead of his troops to camp and there he found a messenger who had just arrived from Ogdensburg. He handed a letter to the general who found it was from Major Parker of the intelligence corps, sent to inform him that the army at Sackett's Harbor had not sailed. Hampton was thunderstruck. He had advanced into Canada in the full belief that the flotilla was on its way and that, on reaching the mouth of the Chateauguay, he would find it waiting to

ferry his army across to Isle Perrot. The purpose of his movement was gone, for there was no use in pushing for the St Lawrence when he knew there would be no boats to meet him. He called a council-of-war, which met on the afternoon of the 27th. He had obtained full information of the British force that was waiting to obstruct his farther advance and it was agreed it was too weak to be considered, it could be brushed aside. The question the general asked them to answer was, Is it advisable to push on knowing we will meet no flotilla? The point was considered in its several lights. Thus, after we have swept aside the enemy now in front of us and resumed our forward march, what would the army do when it reached the St Lawrence? While waiting the arrival of the boats, how were 4000 men and fully 1000 animals to be fed, seeing the country they occupied yielded nothing and they would be separated by a road of forty miles, through a wilderness, from Four Corners, their nearest base of supply? It was agreed that to go on would be to court disaster, therefore the army should return to Four Corners and await advices of the flotilla having sailed. When the officers rose to leave, they had the general order to begin the retreat at once, and the march began to their old camp at Spears. Next morning preparations were made for the longer march before them, and the baggage-train and artillery was started. In the afternoon the last corps got under way and the Spears camp abandoned. These movements met with no hindrance from the British force, which clung to its lines of defence. The Indians, however, kept near, and on the night of the 28th surprised a picket and added to the number of their scalps. The condition of the road made the movement of the army slow, so that a week passed before it regained its former camp at Four Corners. The discontent that prevailed before the incursion into Canada was increased by the hardships of its futile marchings, and the men spoke their minds in a way that would not have been tolerated in any other than a republican army. The officers sympathized with the rank-and-file. They had lost all confidence in their general and were eager to go into winter quarters, which, indeed, the increasing cold was making imperative. The supply of overcoats was so small that they were reserved for the men who stood sentry.

Soon after Armstrong had sent his despatch ordering Hampton to advance into Canada, telling him he would find the flotilla waiting at the mouth of the Chateauguay to ferry his army to Isle Perrot, he left Sackett's Harbor for Albany, hand-

ing over his command to Wilkinson, who, on learning Hampton had returned to Four Corners, sent an order to him to march to St Regis, where the flotilla would take his army on board on the 9th of November. St Regis was less than three days' march from Four Corners, and the road to it was entirely within the United States, so could be covered without opposition. Hampton treated the order with indignation. Wilkinson, he said, was not his superior officer, and he would do as he deemed best. He wrote Armstrong that he would not go to St Regis and was retiring to winter-quarters at Plattsburg. The reasons he gave were, that the supply of forage for the animals was exhausted at Four Corners and that only half of his men were effective, and they were dispirited and worn by fatigue. From Plattsburg, he said, he would make a demonstration on the Canadian frontier to divert attention from Wilkinson. Paroling all his officers who so desired, Hampton hastened to Washington, and tendered his resignation, which was accepted. Among the subalterns who served in the campaign was John E. Wool, who afterwards achieved celebrity. He said, "No officer who had any regard for his reputation would voluntarily acknowledge himself as having been engaged in the Chateauguay encounter."

### Wilkinson

The desertion of Hampton did not necessarily make the plan to capture Montreal abortive. The purpose of his command was more to distract the British attention than to be essential in the final attack. His movements, as a feint to conceal the American plans, had kept Prevost on tenter-hooks for three months and had been successful in causing him to deplete the garrison of Montreal to strengthen that of Kingston. Hampton's retreat to Four Corners did more to help the American cause than had he persevered in reaching the St Lawrence, for it confirmed the commander of the King's forces in his belief that the army in waiting at Sackett's Harbor had Kingston for its goal. Acting on that impression Prevost left Montreal practically defenceless. His final guess of the enemy's intentions, was that Wilkinson would attack Kingston and Hampton, at the same time, march towards Montreal. Knowing the weakness of Hampton's force he considered it could be easily baffled and he would attend to it himself, waiting for it at Lachine. It was a rare opportunity for Wilkinson, which, however, he did not realize. He whined

over Hampton's failure to join him with his little army of 4000, while all the time he had a force in his hands that for the purpose of capturing Montreal was overwhelming. With the British strength bottled in Kingston, it was the easiest of exploits to swoop down on Montreal and make it his prey. Why he failed to do so, forms a remarkable page in American history.

In 1813 the republic was in its infancy as regards material resources, so that when it und rtook to concentrate 15,000 fighting men at a point on its north-western frontier it was making a herculean effort. There were then no railways and no steamboats. Cannon, food, material of every kind except timber, had to go by tortuous rivers with many portages on account of rapids, while the men had to march over roads which were canals of mud. That all difficulties were overcome, that a fleet of several hundred boats was built, and a fully equipped army, including cavalry and an artillery-train, got together at the head of the St Lawrence, told of energy, ingenuity in overcoming obstacles, and financial sacrifice. When, on the 19th October, Armstrong left for Washington, where his authority as Secretary of War was much called for, he considered the expedition ready to sail, and expected it would do so when the weather, which was stormy, with adverse winds, became favorable. As a consequence of his departure, Wilkinson, from second in command, now became chief. By profession he was a physician, but service in the revolutionary war enabled him to pose as a soldier. First and last he was a politician and that at a period when public life was a scandal; when politician meant a man who sought position and opportunity to gain wealth. What he lacked in natural ability, Wilkinson made up in bluster and pretence: there was no louder boaster as to what he would do, no greater failure in performance. In every public position he wormed himself into he left behind a record of incompetency, of quarrelling with subordinates, and a flavor of dishonesty. While his duties at Sackett's Harbor consisted in visits to places on lake Ontario, whence reinforcements and supplies were to come, in consultations with Chauncey, the commander of the lake fleet, in issuing orders and criticising subordinates, his overbearing manner and bombast concealed his incompetence, but when he could no longer avoid entering on active operations he had to find other masks. He did so by pleading ill-health and throwing blame, when failures occurred, on his assistants.

The first stage towards Montreal was leaving Sackett's Harbor for Grenadier Island, a distance of a few miles, which, owing to storms, was accomplished with difficulty. The choice of that island for rendezvous was designed to confirm Prevost's belief that Kingston was to be attacked. On the 29th October all was ready for the next stage, to reach Bush creek, 20 miles farther down the river, where the cavalry and field artillery, who had gone forward by land, were to be in waiting to be ferried to the north bank of the St Lawrence. Again the winds were against the boats, and it was not until the 2nd November that the embarkation of the army began. On the evening of the next day they encamped at French creek. The British were kept informed by their spies of what was going on, and Lieut. Mulcaster with several small gunboats was watching for an opportunity to attack when Chauncey, with a much superior force, appeared. Mulcaster then sailed to Kingston, confirming the news that the expedition was not designed to attack that place, but was bound for Montreal.

On the 4th November the flotilla ought to have been under weigh, but bungling had kept back part of the supplies and the day was lost. On the 5th there was no further excuse for delay. The flotilla emerged from French creek, opposite Gananoque, and streamed downwards. Neither before nor since has Old St Lawrence been the scene of a grander spectacle. There were nigh 350 boats, bearing an army of over 9000 men, with a large contingent of sailors and pilots for the management of the boats. The procession, five miles long, was gay with flags and uniforms, the choruses of the boatmen and the music of fife and drum adding joyous exaltation to the faith of all on board that this armada of the inland seas was sweeping onward to assured victory. It was a charming day, the Indian summer having set in, and such progress was made that before sunset 40 miles had been covered. That night the army encamped at Morristown opposite Brockville. Next day was spent on the sail to Ogdensburg, which was neared at dark. The batteries of Fort Wellington in Prescott were greatly feared. Instead of running the gauntlet at once Wilkinson signalled the flotilla to tie up. The ammunition was loaded on carts and every man unneeded to manage the boats sent to march, under cover of darkness, on the U. S. river bank, to a bay 2 miles below Ogdensburg, where the boats would pick them up next morning. This delay caused the 7th to be lost which was the more deplored by the U. S. staff from its being warm and fine. The boats remained tied up all day

awaiting the dark. When the moon set they rowed rapidly down the stream, when it was proved the fear of the guns of Fort Wellington had been unwarranted. As the long procession of boats began to steal past it, hugging the south shore as closely as possible, a noisy cannonade was opened, but the guns were either badly pointed or the range was too long for their caliber, for not a boat was hit, though one chance shot killed a sailor and wounded two. Two boats, laden with artillery and provisions, ran aground, and were with difficulty got off next morning Having ascertained the British had planted batteries wherever the river was narrow, Colonel Macomb was landed on the Canadian side with 1200 men to clear the bank of them. This caused skirmishes, which invariably ended in the fleeing of the gunners into the bush after spiking or concealing their guns. That night the flotilla tied up at the narrows, 6 miles below Hamilton, having made only 8 miles. Here the cavalry and artillery, who had kept moving onwards on finding the flotilla did not overtake them at Bush creek, was found waiting, and it took much time to ferry the cavalry to the Canadian bank; the guns were taken on board. The farmers living along the north side of the St Lawrence, when questioned by their unwelcome visitors, magnified the dangers they would meet—the terrors of the rapids, the batteries that would rake their boats wherever the river was narrow, the bands of Indians prowling in the woods, the lack of forage. These stories so impressed the Americans that it was decided to strengthen the cavalry, and so next morning General Brown with his brigade of infantry was detailed to accompany them along with two companies of artillery.

This formidable force found few obstructions in their march along the road that skirted the north shore of the St Lawrence. Shots were occasionally exchanged with riflemen hid in the woods and two or three rude blockhouses, erected to shelter the relief guards, were burned. Trifling as their losses were, they confirmed the Americans in their delusion that redcoats were concealed in the bush and were there in force. Wilkinson scattered, by means of the troops he landed, a proclamation assuring the Canadian farmers he had not come to make war upon them but to subdue the King's forces, and if they would remain quietly at home, they would be protected in their persons and property. This had no effect. The farms that lined the Canadian bank of the St Lawrence were owned by

United Empire Loyalists or their descendants, and Wilkinson's threat, if found in arms they would be treated as enemies, did not frighten them. They kept up a guerilla or rather a predatory warfare on the Americans as they marched along and, when the British troops finally did come, joined their ranks. The promise about respecting their homes was not kept, for the American soldiers, under both Macomb and Brown, harried cellars, barns, and stables ruthlessly, making no compensation for what they took. With a few exceptions, the farmers saved their horses and cattle by concealing them in the bush The forage they had saved for winter feed, the U. S. cavalrymen used.

The day after he passed Ogdensburg Wilkinson received a message from his agent there, that two armed schooners had arrived at Prescott, accompanied by several open boats filled with soldiers, and his belief was that they would follow and try to do what harm they could to the flotilla. Of this pursuing party more was soon to be learned. Fine weather continued. The 9th was sunny but, from trivial causes, the flotilla was hindered, and made only ten miles. On tying up for the night reports from spies told that the British had perfected arrangements to obstruct by batteries running of the Soo rapids. Wilkinson ordered the flotilla to stay where it was until the shooting of the rapids was made safe, so he directed Brown to march early next morning and clear the bank of the enemy. Brown, an energetic man, set about his task at daylight and found it troublesome. The enemy, too weak to face him, placed obstructions in the road and kept up a dropping fire from under cover, which delayed his progress. Soon after Brown left, the British schooners hove in sight and opened fire. On the Americans sending ashore two heavy cannon whose shot reached them, they drew out of range. In the afternoon a trooper arrived from Brown, telling he had cleared the bank of the enemy and was encamped at Cornwall. There was still daylight enough to have made the short trip over the rapids to Cornwall, and the flotilla got under weigh. Before it had sailed far Wilkinson changed his mind, saying it was too late to shoot the rapids, so the boats tied up at Cook's Point, nine miles from the head of the rapids. The Americans were now fully aware that they were being closely tracked on land and water. Mulcaster with his gunboats hovered as near as

he could, firing an occassional shot that always fell short, for his guns were small. On the river bank redcoats were several times sighted and there were skirmishes with the American rearguard, entailing a few casualties. The nearness of his foe troubled Wilkinson, for a strong British force could follow and attack the rear of that part of his army that must march along the road on the north-bank of the St Lawrence to join the flotilla at the foot of the Soo rapids. Scouts reporting a considerable body of British regulars encamped in a pine-grove three miles west of him, every precaution was taken against a night attrck, the soldiers slept on their arms and strong patrols covered the camp. The night, however, passed without alarm.

How this force of British regulars came needs to be told. When Lieut. Mulcaster, R.N., sailed into Kingston harbor on the 6th November and reported to the commander, General Rottenburg, that the flotilla had sailed for Montreal, and that Kingston was not to be attacked, prompt action was taken. The sailor was asked if he would undertake to convey a corps of observation, in pursuit of the flotilla and he answered yes. Despatch was used, and, on the night of the 7th, four barges, bearing detachments of the 49th and 89th regiments, rowed out of Kingston harbor and found Mulcaster and his gunboats in waiting. The little force of redcoats was under command of Joseph Wanton Morrison, colonel of the 89th, he being senior officer. The American fleet, under Chauncey, were blockading the river with the express object of guarding Wilkinson's rear by preventing the British gunboats on lake Ontario following him. The St Lawrence, however, is wide and at the foot of the lake has many islands. Mulcaster had a pilot who knew all the channels, and slipt past Chauncey in the darkness. Every expedition was used and next evening Prescott was reached, where the discouraging news awaited them that the Americans had safely run the gauntlet of Fort Wellington's guns. Being no longer necessary, part of its garrison was ordered to join the corps of observation. This reinforcement consisted of the two flank companies of the 49th, a body of militia, and thirty Indians, raising Colonel Morrison's force to 800. Anxious as he was to overtake the flotilla, he tarried long enough next day at the village of Hamilton, on the U.S. bank, to recover a quantity of military stores which the Americans

had captured from a convoy of barges a short time before. After this exploit, Mulcaster kept close on the heels of the flotilla, with occasional exchanges of cannon shot. Finding the flotilla had halted at Cook's point, Morrison and his men landed to await developments, while the gunboats dropped down near enough to open fire, which the Americans returned, without damage to either. The British troops encamped under the pine-trees for the night.

The morning of the 11th November dawned bleak and cloudy, with an east wind that told of coming storm. The night having passed without sign of the enemy, Wilkinson declared he was confident the British dare not attack him, and ordered that the boats be got ready to sail and that the troops on shore begin their march to Cornwall. The movement on both land and water was in progress when Mulcaster renewed his fire from the gunboats and at the same time the Americans beheld a long red column issue from the woods and form in line of battle on a cleared field on the farm of John Crysler. Seen at a distance of nigh a couple of miles, the force looked imposing, and Wilkinson concluded it was necessary to disperse it. The order to the flotilla to sail and to the troops to march to Cornwall was countermanded and preparations made to give battle. There was confusion and unpreparedness that caused delay, and it was not until after dinner the advance was sounded, when General Swartwout's brigade moved on the line of skirmishers thrown out by Morrison, who from bush and ravine were keeping up a lively fire. The skirmishers were militia and Indians who, seeing they were outnumbered, fled for shelter, and the sight of them running evoked prolonged cheering from the American spectators on the boats and the river bank, who took their flight as a prelude to that of the column that stood beyond them. That column was composed of well-tried soldiers. The battalion of the 49th was of Brock's own regiment, and had been with him when he fell at Queenston Heights, their commander was now Lieut.-Col. Harvey, the hero of Stoney Creek. Colonel Morrison and his battalion had arrived in Canada a short time before from service on the Continent. He was of a type of which the British service has never lacked representatives—a devout Christian. Duty called on him to make a stand despite his inadequate force, and he did so in simple faith that the justice of the cause he was called upon to maintain, would secure

victory. The men in arms before him were where they had no right to be, they had come to seize a country to which they had no claim, they had been sent by a government that had broken the peace by declaring war against Britain. If ever a righteous cause was to be upheld at risk of life, it now faced him. His sense of justice impelled him to drive back the invader whence he came, his love of independence to scorn to yield to men intent on forcing a foreign allegiance on Canada. Satisfied in conscience of the justice of the cause whose flag he bore, his knowledge as a soldier told him of the risk he ran in offering battle against such fearful odds. With 800 men he was challenging a General who had it in his power to hurl eight thousand against him.

The field upon which the impending battle was to be fought, was a stretch of clearings along the north bank of the St Lawrence. The plain, broken by stumps and snake-fences, with occasional trees, was nowhere of any great width, for it dropped into an ash swamp that ran alongside it. Morrison had chosen for his position the part of the clearance where it was narrowest, his left resting on the swamp and his right on the St Lawrence, where Mulcaster with his gunboats secured that flank. For the security of his left flank he trusted to the impassability of the swamp. Narrow as the field was there were not men enough, spread thinly as possible, to form a line across, so that there was a wide gap between the 49th and Crysler's buildings, in and around which were posted the militia and a party of sailors. In front of the column ran a ravine, shallow where the creek issued from the swamp, but deepening as it neared the St Lawrence. It was this gully which made Morrison select his ground, for it would be an obstacle in a charge and to the passage of cavalry Morrison had three field-guns, 6-pounders, he posted one at each end of his line, and one in the center. It was nearing 2 o'clock on that raw and gusty afternoon when the British saw six columns advancing towards them across the plain that lay between them and the flotilla, fully two thousand strong. That was not all Morrison had to encounter with his 800. Behind the columns sweeping towards him were the several thousands held in reserve on the flotilla or encamped on the river bank. He was face to face with the entire force Wilkinson had at his command. Allowing for the detachments sent to Cornwall that

PLAN OF THE BATTLEFIELD OF CRYSLER

The plan shows the position of the Combatants
at the opening of the Battle

force must have numbered 7000. The Americans regarded it as inconceivable that the British would make a stand. They took as granted, that, when their first line drew near, the redcoats would disappear among the pine trees behind them. So on they marched, assured of an easy victory, with waving banners, bouncingly keeping step to fife and drum, laughing and shouting, confident they were about to see the men who composed the thin red line that confronted them, to use their own phrase, skoot for cover. As soon as the Americans came within range they began firing, shouting derisive cries to their opponents, who stood silent and stock-still, firing not a shot. Not till the advancing enemy neared the edge of the ravine did Morrison give the word, when a volley rolled forth. More effective was the small six-pounder at the head of his line. The Americans came to a halt. They did not expect this. They began firing by platoons across the shallow ravine, which they did not attempt to cross, the British steadily replying, until the American commander, General Boyd, to end an indecisive long-range duel, ordered his subordinate, Gen. Covington, to take a regiment and turn the British left. The Americans wheeled northward, crossed the ravine, and bore down on the end of Morrison's line, who met the attack by changing the formation of the 89th, so arranging the files that they faced north instead of east. This difficult movement of echelon was effected under fire, yet done as steadily as if on parade. As the Americans advanced, the 89th poured into their ranks a steady fire while the little cannon raked them. Boyd's order was that Covington should charge, but this withering shower of bullets stopped his advance. His men swung backward, firing as fast as muskets could be loaded. Covington fell mortally wounded, so did his successor, and the third who assumed command fared likewise. It was a contest between discipline and numbers, between skill and inexperience. The combatants were of the same stock, and equal in natural courage, but few of the Americans had been under fire until that hour. With fit officers they would have charged as their general ordered. Boyd saw how critical the situation was and hurriedly sent reinforcements, and they were needed, for the rank-and-file were wavering and many were slinking away. For half an hour the fighting went on and during that time the Americans suffered their severest loss. When their firing slackened Morrison felt

the decisive moment had come and ordered the 89th to charge. They crossed the gulley, reformed, and advanced with levelled bayonets. The foe retreated slowly at first, then broke rank and crowded down to where their boats lay. Boyd saw the possibility of a rout and to avert that danger tried a diversion. He ordered a column of fresh troops with two cannon to threaten an attack on the south end of the British line. To repulse this, Morrison had to halt his advance and hasten down across the field to meet this new assault. On coming up with the enemy his men fired a volley and then made a bayonet charge. The Americans fled, leaving one of their cannon and part of their number, who were made prisoners.

General Boyd now realized the day was lost and that the most he could do was to gain enough time to reach the boats. During the fight a squadron of dragoons stood beside the boats as a reserve. Boyd sent the order to their commander to gallop up the road that ran along the St Lawrence bank and endeavor to get behind the British column. On seeing them coming the 49th turned to meet them and the 89th, farther away, hurried to their support. The dragoons came dashingly along and the danger of their succeeding was imminent. They had reached the ravine which, if they were able to cross, would have left them free to take the British position in the rear. The leading files dashed down into the ravine and while crowding up the opposite bank a volley, at point-blank range from the Crysler buildings, that stood on the west side of the ravine, emptied so many saddles that the men were seized with panic, and wheeling their horses galloped back to the boats. That volley was fired by a cluster of sailors and U.E. Loyalists—farmers who had volunteered to save their homes.

It was now 4 o'clock. The plain in front of him was strewn with dead and wounded, and everywhere Morrison could see the Americans running towards their boats, and leaping into them when reached. He ordered a general advance, and his soldiers, now assured of victory, raised a mighty shout. On they swept towards the flotilla, until, on coming within range of the gunboats, Morrison had to sound a halt. Protected by the big guns of the armed boats the last of the Americans got on board, while the routed cavalry stopped not in their flight until they reached Cornwall. On the British taking possession of the

ground left by their foe, they found they had abandoned part of their stores, which they did not stay long enough to reship. Among the spoil were overcoats, blankets, and knapsacks of which the Americans had lightened themselves before advancing to the fight, and which they did not tarry long enough in their flight to recover. The storm now broke, first rain, then sleet, which changed to snow. The victors, cheered by their success, bore cheerfully the discomforts, the hunger and exposure, of a miserable night by their camp fires. The American boats found their way by the moonlight to the landing at the head of the Soo rapids on the U. S. bank, which was reached at 9 p.m. In the wild storm the wounded were carried ashore to find such cover as barns and stables afforded. Their moans and cries in the boats and now when lifted on shore increased the distress of the shivering soldiers and sailors as they faced the blast, and they clamored before their officers it was time to give up and go into winter quarters.

Wilkinson naturally minimized his losses, reporting 102 killed and 237 wounded. This is certain, the British found over 40 American wounded on the field of battle and the day after the fight gave honorable burial to 100 of their dead. Americans taken prisoners numbered 100. The British had 22 killed, 147 wounded, and 12 missing, so that one out of every five who took part in the engagement had dropped out—an unusual percentage.

Daybreak found the crews in charge of the flotilla astir and as the boats got ready they steered into the current, which swept them into the Long Soo, when its mighty tide hurried them swiftly to calm water at Barnhart island, where they found General Brown with his brigade, and who had made preparation for their camping. Shooting the rapids was an expeditious method of transporting the army and Wilkinson had soon his command once more concentrated. There was only one sentiment in that army about him, and it was, that he was an incapable. The defeat of the previous day was due to his lack of executive ability. The flotilla had spent eight days in making eighty miles enabling Mulcaster and Morrison to overtake them. A log, set adrift in the channel, would have made the distance in two days. With proper management the army ought now to have been on the island of Montreal. As it was, between the weather

and their pursuers, they looked for continued disasters. Among those who greeted Wilkinson on his landing on Barnhart island was Colonel Atkinson, who explained he had come from Four Corners and had waited at St Regis for the flotilla. The letter he bore from Hampton stated he would have been glad to join Wilkinson at St Regis but had not provisions for his men or forage for his horses to make the journey. Professing to be indignant, Wilkinson secretly rejoiced over the message—it gave him an excuse to abandon the expedition and shoulder its failure on Hampton. He called a council-of-war and laid Hampton's letter before them. On Hampton's refusal to obey his order to be at St Regis, he dwelt with voluble severity. Just when the grand object of the expedition was within grasp it had been snatched away by Hampton's extraordinary, unexampled and unwarrantable conduct, which was an outrage on every principle of subordination and discipline. He told the officers that, without Hampton's army, he would not undertake to go to Montreal. With two dissentients they endorsed his decision. Despicable as Hampton's motives may have been in not marching to St Regis, his not doing so saved the Republic from another disaster to her arms. St Regis was a miserable Indian village on the edge of what, in 1813, was a wilderness. The country affording no supplies the army would have been reduced to starvation before the flotilla appeared.

The council decided the flotilla should make for the Salmon river, as a safe place for it to winter, and that it go at once. Wilkinson then issued a general-order to that effect in which he declared "He with lively regret and the deepest mortification suspends the attack on Montreal, but he assures the army it is not abandoned." The two regiments of dragoons were ferried to the U. S. bank and left that afternoon for Utica, and then the flotilla sailed for Salmon river, where the first boats ended their career at 3 in the morning of the 13th November.

There was no justification for Wilkinson's abandoning the capture of Montreal. He was within three days' easy sail of it and had an overwhelming force for the purpose. On the 8th December, when the Salmon river camp had been got into something like shape, a roster was taken, and it showed an army of regulars of 8,143, and that after 3 weeks during which desertions were of nightly occurrence and there had been many releases on furlough, so that

when, at that eventful council on Barnhart island it was decided to give up the advance on Montreal, Wilkinson must have had nigh 10,000 apart from cavalry and boatmen, and he knew full well there were not hundreds for his thousands in front of him. The defeat inflicted by Colonel Morrison explains his eagerness to escape further contest. Morrison was about to pursue him in Mulcaster's boats when he was astounded by the surprising information that the Americans had fled the scene.

Three miles above the mouth of the Salmon river, where the first rapid gave power, there stood a small grist-mill and a saw-mill, and clustered about them the shanties of those who found employment in them, together with two taverns and a store or two. On a knoll near these was a blockhouse, where a small garrison was kept. Late in the afternoon of the 13th a courier brought to the little hamlet the surprising word that the army of the north was coming and to prepare for the reception of the wounded. Hours passed before the head of the melancholy procession of boats was seen stealing up the moonlight waters. The wounded men were carried to the blockhouse until it was filled and other cover had to be sought. General Covington died before he could be borne ashore. His body was taken to Ware's tavern and buried with military honors the following day. His name is perpetuated by the pretty village of the present day, its original name, French Mills, giving place to Fort Covington in 1817, when a municipality was organized. The word "Fort" was prefixed to distinguish the new town from Covington, Ky. The body of the General with those of two other officers were, after the war, exhumed for final interment at Sackett's Harbor.

Not all the boats found moorings in the Salmon river. A few openly rowed to the Canada shore, the soldiers preferring desertion to the hardships before them. Worse still was the conduct of many officers, who sold the stores on their boats and pocketed the money. With what boards were in the millyard flimsy sheds were run up, but they were far too few and the majority of the men had to live in tents. On the 1st December winter set in. The wretchedness of their condition can hardly be exaggerated. The country was a wilderness, with no store of provisions to draw upon except what had been brought in the boats and that was speedily exhausted. Before a fortnight rations had been reduced to barely enough to main-

tain life, and there were regiments that went without biscuits for four days, and, what made it worse, were of a quality that even starving men loathed them. The biscuits were mouldy and had been made from the flour of sprouted wheat. The meal designed as poultices for wounds, the doctors had to order to be cooked as food for the sick and they reported that, without proper food and medicines, it was impossible for those under their care to recover. Dysentery, inflammation of the lungs, and typhus-fever soon became prevalent, but, more frightful than these dread diseases, was a paralysis of the limbs—a dry rot or withering of the extremities. The physicians ascribed its cause to the biscuits made from smutty flour, and were happy, in prescribing opium to relieve the pain of the sufferers, to find that the drug also counteracted the disease. Before Christmas one-third of the army was unfit for duty; how many died during those six dismal weeks is unknown. By that time, lumber had been obtained and huts were erected for those who had been under canvas, and the sick and wounded had been conveyed to Malone, which village was converted into an hospital. The conduct of many of the captains of companies was shameful. In the sufferings of their men they saw an opportunity of making money. They did not revise the rolls they sent to headquarters and drew pay and rations for men who had deserted or found graves on the banks of the Salmon river. The pay they pocketed, the rations they sold to the survivors. That there were honorable and patriotic men in the army is undeniable, but the majority of the officers were ignorant and unscrupulous; school-district and ward politicians, who owed their position to the influences of caucus and partyism, and who viewed the campaign as a means of enriching themselves. As depicted by those who served under them, a more despicable set of men never officered an army; blatant as to their patriotism and hatred of Great Britain, yet defrauding their own government and making secret offers to the British of the provisions and war-material they meanly purloined. On getting their pay, which was only $6 a month, the soldiers spent it in buying food from the settlers, who came in sleighs from a great distance to find a market for their produce in the stricken camp. When the St Lawrence froze desertions increased, for it was known the British garrison at Cornwall was ready not only to welcome them but to

make up any arrears of pay due them by the U. S. government. As the weary winter days passed discontent in the camp grew into mutiny, so that one morning a big crowd of them actually started to march to Sackett's Harbor and were with difficulty persuaded by the commanding general to return. Their only excuse was, that anything was better than the hardships they were enduring.

While his army was in this dreadful state, Wilkinson was living in comfort at the residence of a leading citizen of Malone, whither, the day after his troops went into camp, he had been borne in a litter on the shoulders of eight men. Whether his illness was the result of unavoidable causes or arose from drink is in doubt, but it certainly had no effect in checking his boastful inclinations. He kept writing to Washington advising what ought to be done to capture Montreal, speaking as if his army were intact and ready for service and he was the general to direct the campaign. The disappointment of the American people at the failures of Hampton and Wilkinson was intense and their expressions of indignation loud. Had the army on the Salmon river been kept intact it could, when spring came, have taken again to its boats and occupied Montreal before reinforcements arrived by sea, but its disorganization went on so rapidly that to save the remnant the order was sent from Washington to divide what was left of it, 2000 to march to the barracks at Sackett's Harbor and the remainder to those at Plattsburg. On the 3rd February preparations for abandoning camp were begun. The masts of part of the boats were cut and the hulls then sunk. The remainder were set fire to and burned to the water's edge. In all, 328 boats were destroyed. The huts and stores that could not be moved were burnt or dumped into the river.

The grand campaign to capture Montreal and with it all Canada west of the fortress of Quebec thus ended in defeat and disaster, in mutiny and shame. Wilkinson was court-marshaled and Armstrong was compelled to resign, but neither they nor any responsible for the miscarriage of the campaign were punished. While Hampton, Wilkinson, and Armstrong were primarily responsible, the cause of failure lay with the American public. The success of the revolution of 1776 had intoxicated them with pride and to those who took part in it they attributed qualities to which they could lay no claim. Men were rated as heroes who

were mere blusterers; self-sacrifice attributed to men who took advantage of the disorders that prevailed during the revolution to enrich themselves, and patriotism ascribed to bosoms where selfishness reigned. That the triumph of the revolution was due to assistance from abroad, to French money, fleets, and armies, was ignored, and ascribed to Washington and his generals. So it came, when war was declared in 1812, the men who were embalmed in the public mind as the personification of every military virtue were given command. The result was disastrous. Hull, Dearborn, Hampton, Wilkinson, Armstrong were all veterans of the revolution, and in their respective failures throw a side-light on the quality of the leaders of the revolution. The war lasted another year, and there was fierce fighting along the Niagara frontier, but there was no renewal of the attempt to capture Montreal. The campaign which ended on Crysler's farm ensured its safety.

Wilkinson declared it was not the event of the 11th November that caused his abandonment of the campaign. It is self-evident, however, that had Morrison's little army been routed he would have had no excuse to give up his advance on Montreal. He would have met no opposition to give him concern until the spires of that city met his sight, and, even then, its paltry garrison of 200 sailors and 400 marines, drawn from the fleet at Quebec, and a mob of militiamen dragged from their homes by compulsion to shoulder a gun, could not have withstood him. With Montreal in U.S. possession all the British troops west of it, cut off from their base of supply, would have had to surrender, and the stars-and-stripes would have flown over all Canada west of Quebec. It was the battle of Crysler that saved Canada. At the distance of a century we perceive events in their right proportion, and recognize Crysler to be the decisive battle of the war of 1812. So long as Canadians rejoice in being Britons they ought to cherish the memory of Morrison and his eight hundred.

ROBERT SELLAR

Huntingdon, Que., May 1, 1913.

**Colonel Joseph Winton Morrison**

Was the son of an officer in the British army, who was stationed in New York during the period before the war of Independence. He was born in 1773. On the family returning to England he was educated there, and, while still a stripling, got a commission in the army. He was moved about a great deal, seeing some service in the field, and rose to be Lieut.-Colonel. On the war of 1812 breaking out, he was sent with his battalion of the 89th regt. to Halifax, and the following summer was ordered to Upper Canada. While in garrison at Kingston he was detached, as told in the foregoing narrative. to follow the flotilla of Wilkinson. For his victory of Crysler he received no official recognition, beyond being awarded, with the other officers who fought with him, a medal. The summer of 1814 he and his battalion served on the Niagara frontier. At Lundy's Lane he was so severely wounded that his life was despaired of. He was sent to England, making a slow recovery. In 1822 he was ordered to India, and in the wars with the natives greatly distinguished himself. Exposure to an unhealthy climate broke down his constitution, compelling him to return homeward. While the ship was making her way to England he died, aged 57 years. Efforts to secure a portrait of him for this monograph were futile. The following is the official despatch in which he reported the battle of Crysler—

The enemy's force, consisting of two brigades of infantry and a regiment of cavalry. amounting to between three and four thousand men, moved forward about two o'clock in the afternoon, from Cook's Point, and attacked our advance, which gradually fell back to the position selected for the detachment to occupy, the right resting on the river and the left on a pine-wood, exhibiting about seven hundred yards. The ground being open, the troops were thus disposed—

The flank companies of the 49th regiment, and the detachment of the Canadian regiment, with a field-piece, on the right ; under Lieut.-Colonel Pearson. A little advanced up the road, three companies of the 89th regiment, formed in echellon, with a gun; under Captain Barnes, with the advance on its left, supporting it. The 49th and 89th, thrown more to the rear ,with a gun, formed the main body and reserve, extending to the woods on the left; which were occupied by the Voltigeurs, under Major Herriot, and the Indians under Lieut. Anderson.—At about half-past two the action became general, when the enemy endeavored, by moving forward a brigade from his right, to turn our left, but was repulsed by the 89th regiment forming en potence with the 49th regiment, and by moving forward, occasionally firing by platoons. His efforts were next directed against our right, and to repulse this movement, the 49th regiment took ground in that direction, in echellon, followed by the 89th. When within half musket shot, the

line was formed under a heavy but irregular fire from the enemy. The 49th was directed to charge their guns, posted opposite to ours, but it became necessary, when within a short distance of them, to check this forward movement, in consequence of a charge from their cavalry on the right, lest they should wheel about, and fall upon our rear, but they were received in so gallant a manner by the companies of the 89th under Captain Barnes, and the well directed fire of the artillery, that they quickly retreated, and by a charge from those companies, one gun was gained.— The enemy immediately concentrated his force to check our advance, but such was the steady countenance and well directed fire of the troops and artillery, that about half-past four, they gave way at all points from an exceeding strong position, endeavoring by their light infantry to cover their retreat, who were driven away by a judicious movement made by Lieut.-Colonel Pearson. The detachment, for the night, occupied the ground from which the enemy had been driven.

It is now my grateful duty to point out to your honor the benefit the service has received from the ability, judgment, and active exertions of Lt.-Col. Harvey, the deputy adjutant-general, for sparing whom to accompany the detachment I must again publicly express my acknowledgements. To the cordial co-operation and exertions of Lt.-Col. Pearson, commanding the detachment from Prescott; Lt.-Col. Penderleath, 49th regt.; Major Clifford, 89th regt.; Major Herriot of the Voltigeurs, and Captain Jackson of the royal artillery, combined with the gallantry of the troops, our great success may be attributed. Every man did his duty, and, I believe, I cannot more strongly speak their merits than in mentioning our small force did not exceed eight hundred rank and file.

To Captains Davis and Skinner, of the quarter-master general's department, I am under the greatest obligations for the assistance I have received from them; their zeal and activity have been unremitting. Lieut. Haggerman of the militia and Lieut. Anderson of the Indian department have also, for their services, deserved my public acknowledgments.

### Wilkinson's Official Report of the Battle

A variety of reports of the British movements and counter movements were brought to me in succession, which convinced me of their determination to hazard an attack when it could be done to the greatest advantage; and therefore I resolved to anticipate them. Directions were accordingly sent by that distinguished officer, Col. Swift, of the engineers, to Brig. Gen. Boyd, to throw the detachments of his command assigned to him in the order of the preceding day, and composed of his own, Covington's and Swartwout's brigades, into three columns, to march upon the enemy, outflank them, if possible, and take their artillery. The action soon after commenced with the advanced body of the enemy, and became extremely sharp and galling, and with occasional pauses, but sustained with great vivacity in open space and fair combat, for upwards of two and a half hours, the adverse lines alternately yielding and advancing. It is impossible to say with

accuracy what was our number on the field, because it consisted of indefinite detachments taken from the boats to render safe the passage of the rapids. Gens. Covington and Swartwout voluntarily took part in the action, at the head of detachments from their respective brigades, and exhibited the same courage that was displayed by Brig. Gen. Boyd, who happened to be the senior officer on the ground. Our force engaged might have reached 1,600 or 1,700 men, but actually did not exceed 1,800; that of the enemy was estimated from 1,200 to 2.000, but did not probably amount to more than 1,500 or 1,600, consisting, as I am informed, of detachments from the 49th, 84th and 104th regiments of the line, with three companies of the Voltigeur and Glengarry corps, and the militia of the country, who were not included in the estimate.

It would be presumptuous in me to attempt to give a detailed account of the affair, which certainly reflects high honor on the valor of the American soldier, as no examples can be produced of undisciplined men with inexperienced officers, braving a fire of two hours and a half, without quitting the field, or yielding to their antagonist. The information is derived from officers in my confidence, who took active parts in this conflict; for though I was enabled to order the attack, it was my hard fortune not to be able to lead the troops I commanded. The disease with which I was assailed on the 2nd of September, on my journey to Fort George, has, with a few short intervals of convalescence, preyed on me ever since, and at the moment of this action, I was confined to my bed, and emaciated almost as a skeleton, unable to sit on my horse, or move ten paces without assistance. I must, however, be pardoned for trespassing on your time a few remarks in relation to the affair.

The objects of the British and Americans were precisely opposed; the last being bound by the instructions of the government, and the most solemn obligations of duty, to precipitate their designs on the St Lawrence by every practicable means; because this being effected, one of the greatest difficulties opposed to the American arms would be surmounted, while the first, by duties equally imperious, to retard and if possible, prevent such descent. He is to be counted victorious who effected his purpose! Ths British commander having failed to gain either of his objects, can lay no claim to the honors of the day. The battle fluctuated, and seemed at different times inclined to the contending corps. The front of the enemy were at first forced back more than a mile, and though they never regained the ground they lost, their stand was permanent and their courage resolute. Amidst these charges and near the close of the contest, we lost a field piece by the fall of an officer, who was serving it with the same coolness as if he had been at a parade or a review. This was Lieut. Smith, of the light artillery, who, in point of merit, stood at the head of his grade. The enemy having halted and our troops being again formed into battalion, front to front, we resumed our position on the bank of the river, and the infantry being much fatigued, the whole were reembarked and proceeded down the river without any further annoyance from the enemy or their gun-boats, while the dragoons, with five pieces of light artillery, marched down the Canada shore without molestation.

It is due to his rank, to his worth, and his services, that I should make particular mention of Brig. Gen. Covington, who received a mortal wound directly through the body while animating his men and leading them to the charge. He fell where he fought, at the head of his men, and survived but two days.

The dead rest in honor, and the wounded bled for their country and deserve its gratitude.

### Hampton's Account of The Skirmish of Chateauguay

The army was put in motion on the morning of the 26th October, leaving its baggage, etc., on the ground of encampment. On advancing near the enemy it was found that the column I had sent (the previous evening to cross by a ford and take the enemy in the rear) was not as far advanced as anticipated. The guides had misled it, and finally failed in finding the ford. We could not communicate with it, so waited the sound of attack from below. At 2 o'clock firing was heard on the south side of the Chateauguay river, when our troops advanced rapidly to the attack. The enemy's light troops commenced a sharp fire, but Brig.-Major Izard, advancing with his brigade, drove him everywhere behind his defenses and silenced the fire in front. This brigade would have pushed forward as far as courage, skill, and perseverance could have carried it, but, while advancing, the firing on the south bank of the river ceased, and word came the ford had not been gained. The enemy retired behind his defenses, but a renewal of his attack was expected, and our troops remained some time in their position to meet it. The troops on the south bank of the river were excessively fatigued. Its purpose having failed, Colonel Purdy was ordered to withdraw his column to a ford 4 or 5 miles above and cross over. The day was spent and Gen. Izard was ordered to withdraw his brigade to a position three miles in the rear, to which place the baggage was ordered forward. The slowness and order with which Gen. Izard retired with his brigade must have inspired the enemy with respect. They presumed not to venture a shot at him during his movement. The unguardedness of some part of Purdy's command exposed him to a rear attack from the Indians, which was repeated after dark, entailing some loss These attacks were always repelled and must have cost the enemy as many lives as we lost. Our entire loss in killed, wounded, and missing does not exceed fifty. In its new position, within three miles of the enemy's post, the army encamped on the night of the 26th and remained until 12 o'clock of the 28th. All the deserters, of whom there were four, concurred in the information that Sir George Prevost, with three other general officers, had arrived with the whole of his disposable force and lay in rear of the defenses.

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